loan schemes leading to self employment are expected to have positive impact upon its beneficiaries of whom approximately 10-15% fall in the age group.

(b) and (c). Question does not arise.

[Translation]

Sabotage of Railway Tracks

3655. SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
KUMARI UMABHARATI :
SHRI SATYA DEO SINGH :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there has been a significant increase in the incidents of sabotage of railway tracks in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the States where most of the incidents of sabotage of rail tracks have taken place;

(d) the loss suffered by the country as a result thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by the Government to prevent these incidents in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (e) the registration, investigation, detection and prevention of crime relating to Railways is the responsibility of the Government Railway Police (GRP) which functions under the control of respective State Governments/UT Administrations. Information under the Crime Head 'Sabotage of Railway Tracks' is not maintained at the Central level.

[English]

Financial Powers to States

3656. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have set up a permanent Committee under the Inter-State Council to examine the proposals for devolution of more financial powers to States;

(b) if so, whether any Standing Committee has been appointed to report to the Government in this regard within shortest period of time; and

(c) if so, the main points referred to the Committee and the time by which the Committee is likely to submit its report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) to (c). In its second meeting held on 15.10.1996, the Inter-State Council recommended that there should be Standing Committee of the Council for continuous consultations and processing of matters for the considerations of the Council. The said Committee has since been constituted. This Committee will :

(i) have continuous consultations and process matters for considerations of the Council.

(ii) review and update the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission especially the vital questions of devolution of financial powers from the Central Government to the State Governments;

(iii) examine the changes required in article 356 of the Constitution;

(iv) consider the current views of the State Governments on 179 recommendations on which there was a consensus in the Sub-Committee and also the 12 items on which there was no consensus;

(v) process all matters pertaining to Centre-State relations before they are taken up for consideration in the Inter-State Council.

(vi) monitor the implementation of decisions taken on the recommendations of the Council; and

(vii) consider any other matter referred to it by the Chairman/Council.

The Standing Committee will submit its report on items (ii) and (iii) above within three months.

[Translation]

Home Guards

3657. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the security of the office of the Chief Controller (Pension) which was with the Home Guards under his Ministry has now suddenly been withdrawn and entrusted to a Private Company;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the annual expenditure being incurred on the new arrangement;

(c) whether it has been reported that this had been done with the connivance of the officers of the said office; and

(d) if so, the measures being taken by the Ministry to restore the same with the Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). The services of the Home Guards have been withdrawn from 31.10.1996. The Central Pension Accounting Office has now entrusted the security of the office to a private security agency which is also providing security cover to the Passport Office under the Ministry of External Affairs and is approved by the Security Bureau of that Ministry. This arrangement has been